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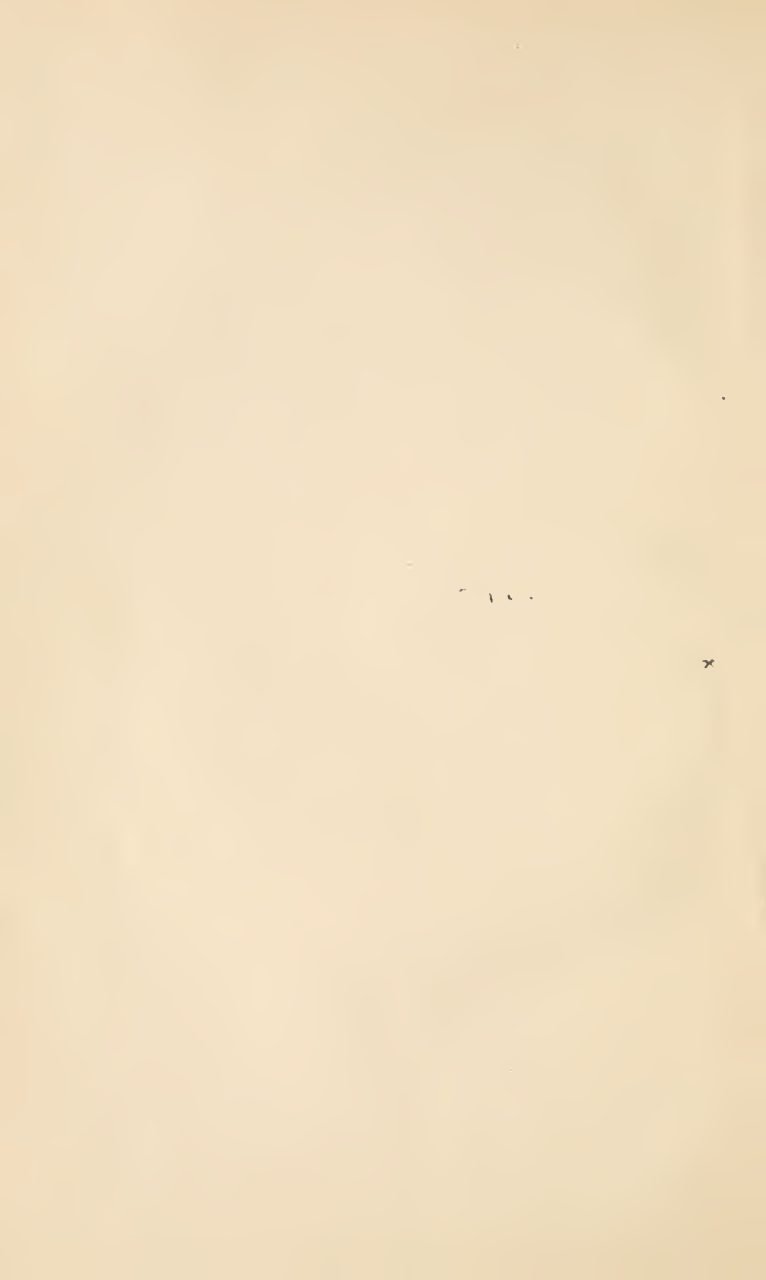
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THE GERMAN INFLUENCE
ON
SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

AN ABRIDGMENT OF A

THESIS

Presented to the Faculty of the Department of Philosophy of the University of Pennsylvania in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

BY

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THE GERMAN INFLUENCE ON SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE.

The study of comparative literature has done much to establish the inter-relationship of early literary monuments, and to illustrate the adaptations and variations of themes and episodes in the ages when sources were relatively few and were widely known among the learned classes. When, however, we carry our researches into more recent fields, and seek to trace the genesis of the complex literary utterances of a modern writer, we are frequently confronted by a bewildering array of possible sources and influences. Our knowledge of the writer's tastes, his studies, his travels, the books in his library, and a score of other factors are of invaluable aid in determining the character and extent of his indebtedness to previous authors; yet, even with the greatest care, the critic who undertakes to trace a particular influence is prone to exaggerate its importance. In his desire to strengthen his chain of evidence, he refers every utterance of the writer to its nearest analogue in the suspected source; and when that source happens to be a great national literature, it is a remarkable thought or bit of imagery that cannot be traced to some more or less plausible original.

In the case of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, the temptation to find a strong German influence is unusually great. He read innumerable volumes of German poetry, criticism, and philosophy, and his own works abound in borrowings and adaptations from German originals. The results of this extensive appropriation are undoubtedly evident in most of Coleridge's later works; but to insist that these German influences are manifest in *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*,

Christabel, and *Kubla Khan* is evidently too great a demand upon the credulity of dispassionate readers.

The foundations of our attributed influences are necessarily the author's own acknowledgements, direct and indirect, supplemented by those obligations that can be established beyond a possibility of doubt. The careful critic is mindful of the line of demarcation between the proved and the probable or possible. The acceptance of the former is incumbent upon all; the weight of the latter rests mainly on the evidence and the authority of the critic.

In the thesis abridged in the following pages an attempt was made to show the real character of the influence of German literature upon Coleridge by discussing (1) Coleridge's own utterances concerning German authors and their writings; (2) the evident literary influences, whether acknowledged or not; (3) the probable or possible influences that have been advanced and supported by various critics.

BEFORE THE VISIT TO GERMANY (1772-1798).

The accounts of Coleridge's omnivorous reading in his boyhood days at Ottery and afterwards at Christ's Hospital record no works by German authors. The first apparent reference to a German writer was at the age of twenty-two, when, as a student at Cambridge, Coleridge wrote (November, 1794) a letter to Southey describing his first acquaintance with *Die Räuber*: "'Tis past one o'clock in the morning. I sat down at twelve o'clock to read the 'Robbers' of Schiller. I had read, chill and trembling, when I came to the part where the Moor fixes a pistol over the robbers who are asleep. I could read no more. My God, Southey, who is this Schiller, this convulser of the heart? Did he write his tragedy amid the yelling of fiends? . . . Why have we ever called Milton sublime? that Count de Moor horrible wielder of heart withering virtues? Satan is scarcely qualified to attend his execution as gallows chaplain."¹

Coleridge, who read the play in Lord Woodhouselee's (1792) translation, gave fuller expression of his enthusiasm in his sonnet *To the Author of 'The Robbers'*² which was probably written soon after, and was published in his *Poems* (1796) with the following note: "One night in winter, on leaving a College-friend's room, with whom I had supped, I carelessly took away with me 'The Robbers,' a drama the very name of which I had never before heard of: A winter midnight—the wind high—and 'The Robbers' for the first time! The readers of Schiller will conceive what I felt. Schiller introduces no supernatural beings; yet his human beings agitate and astonish more than all the *goblin* rout—even of Shakespeare."

¹ *Letters*, ed. E. H. Coleridge, I, 96-97.

² *Poet. Works*, ed. Campbell, pp. 34, 572.

Coleridge soon familiarized himself with other works of Schiller that appeared in translation about this time. In his *Conciones ad Populum* (1795) in condemning the British recruiting methods, he wrote: "Schiller, a German himself, (beneath the tremendous sublimity of whose genius we have glowed and shuddered, while we perused 'The Robbers,') in his tragedy of 'Cabal and Love' represents a German prince as having sent a casket of jewels to his concubine. On her enquiring what might be the price of the jewels, she is told they were received from the English government, for seven thousand young men sent to America."¹ This was followed by a passage evidently quoted from [J. R. Timäus'] translation (1795) of the play. In *The Plot Discovered* (1795) he again referred to the "tremendous sublimity" of Schiller.²

A year later, Coleridge published the short-lived *Watchman*. The third number contained a "Historical Sketch of the Manners and Religion of the Ancient Germans, Introductory to his Sketch of the Manners, Religion and Politics of Present Germany." The untimely death of the paper prevented the completion of the plan. There was a passing allusion to Goethe's *Werter*³ in one of the later numbers.

In a letter of April 1, 1796, we find Coleridge's first reference to Lessing. He wrote: "The most formidable infidel is Lessing, the author of *Emilia Galotti*; I ought to have written *was*, for he is dead. His book is not yet translated, and it is entitled, in German, 'Fragments of an Anonymous Author.' It unites the wit of Voltaire with the subtlety of Hume and the profound erudition of *our* Lardner. I had some thoughts of translating it with an answer, but gave it up, lest men, whose tempers and hearts incline them to disbelief, should get hold of it; and, though the

¹ *Essays on his Own Times*, ed. Sara Coleridge, I, 50-51.

² *Ibid.*, I, p. 70.

³ *Omniana*, ed. T. Ashe, pp. 378-379.

answers are satisfactory to my own mind, they may not be equally so to the minds of others.”¹

In May, 1796, when he recognized that *The Watchman* was a failure, Coleridge communicated his immediate plans to his friend Poole: “I am studying German, and in about six weeks shall be able to read that language with tolerable fluency. Now I have some thoughts of making a proposal to Robinson, the great London bookseller, of translating all the works of Schiller, which would make a portly quarto, on condition that he should pay my journey and my wife’s to and from Jena, a cheap German University where Schiller resides, and allow me two guineas each quarto sheet, which would maintain me. If I could realize this scheme, I should there study chemistry and anatomy, and bring over with me all the works of Semler and Michaelis, the German theologians, and of Kant, the great German metaphysician.”² Nothing came of this proposal. A few months later (July, 1796) Charles Lamb wrote to Coleridge: “Have you read the Ballad called ‘Leonora’ in the second Number of the *Monthly Magazine*? If you have!!!! There is another fine song, from the same author (Burger) in the third Number, of scarce inferior merit.”³ In spite of the fact that Coleridge left no record of having read *Leonora* at that time, much stress has been laid on Lamb’s letter by the critics. In a note appended to a letter of December, 1796, Coleridge quoted a passage from Voss’s *Luise*, and observed that Moses Mendelssohn was deemed Germany’s “profoundest metaphysician, with the exception of the most unintelligible Immanuel Kant.”⁴

In his unsuccessful tragedy *Osorio* (1797) the first evidences of German influence are manifest. Professor

¹ *Works*, ed. Shedd, III, 634-635.

² *Ibid.*, III, 638-639. See also Brandl, *S. T. C. und die englische Romantik*, or Lady Eastlake’s translation, pp. 157: 151.

³ Lamb’s *Letters*, ed. Ainger, I, p. 30.

⁴ *Letters*, *op. cit.*, I, 203-204.

Brandl¹ investigated the sources of *Osorio* and made clear Coleridge's obligation to Schiller's *Der Geisterscher* and *Die Räuber*. The former work was translated into English (1795) by [D. Boileau] as *The Ghostseer, or the Apparitionist*. The first three acts of *Osorio* are based upon part of the *Sicilian's Tale* in *The Ghostseer*, but the catastrophe and certain details were necessarily changed. The influence of *Die Räuber* is quite evident throughout, notably in the dungeon scene. The play was set in the prevalent style of the School of Terror, with the machinery of the Inquisition and its dark, mysterious personages.

In November, 1797, Coleridge wrote to Cottle that he was translating Wieland's *Oberon*, but nothing further was heard of it. About this time, *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* and (probably) *Christabel* were begun. It is likely that *The Wanderings of Cain*—an exquisite prose fragment in avowed imitation of Gessner's *Death of Abel*—was written early in 1798. To this same brief epoch of golden poetry belongs the witching melody of *Kubla Khan*.

The idea of visiting Germany with the Wordsworths took definite shape before March, 1798, and arrangements were completed during the summer. Early in September, a few days before their departure, the *Lyrical Ballads* were published. The reception accorded to that memorable volume was unfavorable, but not as hostile as most literary historians would lead us to believe. The significant point of the contemporary criticism lay in the general disapprobation of *The Ancient Mariner*. Southey² called the poem "a Dutch attempt at German sublimity," and this opinion was echoed in the *Analytical Review*,³ which found in the poem "more of the extravagance of a mad German poet, than the simplicity of our ancient ballad writers." Charles Lamb scored

¹ Brandl, *op. cit.*, 171-177: 167-170.

² *Critical Rev.*, XXIV, n. s., 197-204. Cf. Robberd's *Memoir of William Taylor*, I, p. 223.

³ *Analytical Rev.*, XXVIII, p. 583.

Southey for the impertinent criticism: "If you wrote that review in the *Critical Review*, I am sorry you are so sparing of praise to the *Ancient Mariner*. So far from calling it as you do, with some wit but more severity, a 'Dutch attempt,' etc., I call it a right English attempt, and a successful one, to dethrone German sublimity."¹

No thorough and systematic study of the sources of *The Ancient Mariner* has yet been made, though Cruikshank's dream, Shelvocke's *Voyages*, James' *Strange and Dangerous Voyage*, and the letter of St. Paulinus to Macarius have all been duly considered. The only question of present interest is Coleridge's imputed obligation to Bürger's *Lenore*. Emile Legouis wrote² that Coleridge was "full of enthusiasm for Bürger's *Lenore* when he undertook *The Ancient Mariner*," but mentioned no authority for that statement. Similarly, Professor Brandl³ found both direct and indirect influence of *Lenore* in *The Ancient Mariner*, as well as in *Christabel*, *Kubla Khan*, *Love*, and *The Ballad of the Dark Ladie*. While it is probable that Coleridge knew the popular *Lenore* in translation, we are hardly justified in claiming that he was "full of enthusiasm" for a poem which he did not mention; and Professor Brandl's only cited objective authority is Lamb's letter asking Coleridge if he had read *Leonora*. The latter critic sought to establish the "influence" by citing such analogies as the sinking of the ship at the end of *The Ancient Mariner*, and the disappearance of the horse at the end of *Lenore*.

Lamb exercised his rare critical faculty when he rebuked Southey's sneer, and defended *The Ancient Mariner* as a "right English attempt." Recently, Professor Beers,⁴ in taking exception to Southey's remark, wrote: "The Mariner is not in the least German, and when he wrote it Coleridge

¹ *Letters*, ed. Ainger, I, p. 95.

² *Early years of Wordsworth*, p. 421.

³ *Lenore in England*, in Erich Schmidt's *Charakteristiken*, p. 247.

⁴ *A History of Eng. Romanticism in the Eighteenth Century*, p. 419.

had not been in Germany and did not know the language." The statement is valid, though the reasoning is inconclusive; in the preceding year, Coleridge had known enough of translated German literature to borrow extensively from Schiller for his *Osorio*. There is no reason why Coleridge should not have imitated *Lenore*, if he had been so inclined; but the fact that such an imputed imitation explains nothing that is not otherwise explicable, affords small excuse for insisting upon such an influence. The same holds true of *Kubla Khan*; if we must accept the line, "By woman wailing for her demon-lover" as a direct influence of *Lenore*, to what source shall we turn for the similar idea, "And mingle foul embrace with fiends of Hell" expressed in the sonnet on Mrs. Siddons, which was written by Coleridge and Lamb two years before any English version of *Lenore* was printed?

Compared to the indisputable influence of Schiller on *Osorio*, and Coleridge's frequent reference to that poet, the plea for *Lenore* influence on the 1797-98 poems seems far-fetched; the motive of the maiden and her ghostly lover was present in English balladry long before the time of Bürger and was familiar to every reader of Percy's *Reliques*. Numerous sources, quite as probable as *Lenore*, could be mentioned, yet there would be no actual gain in our knowledge of the genesis of the poems.

We have seen that Coleridge possessed some knowledge of German literature and made several attempts to study the language before his departure for Germany in 1798. The influence of Schiller was paramount, but he also knew something of Lessing, Voss, Wieland, and Goethe. Schiller's influence was important, since Coleridge regarded him as one of the greatest of living poets and dramatists; but this admiration soon waned, and Coleridge assumed a more conservative attitude even before he visited Germany.

COLERIDGE IN GERMANY (1798-1799).

There is considerable material¹ for an account of Coleridge's visit to Germany, but large gaps still remain in the narrative. It is an important period in Coleridge's career, marking the turning point from his poetical activity to his interest in philosophy and criticism. The two epochs are not distinct, as Coleridge never lost that catholicity of spirit which made him the greatest of living minds in the eyes of his friends and contemporaries. Yet an analysis of his mental development, as indicated by Professor Brandl and others² must lead to the accepted conclusion.

The party that sailed on September 16, 1798, from Yarmouth on the Hamburg packet included William and Dorothy Wordsworth, Coleridge, and the latter's friend, John Chester, who remained with him throughout the German visit. The voyage was admirably described in the first of *Satyrane's Letters*, printed in *The Friend*, and afterwards with the *Biographia Literaria*.³ They reached Hamburg on Wednesday, September 19, and spent the first few days in Germany as described in Satyrane's second letter and Dorothy Wordsworth's journal. On Thursday, Wordsworth and Coleridge met Klopstock's brother. In describing a fine portrait of Lessing at the latter's home, Coleridge disclaimed all previous knowledge of Lessing "but his name, and that he was a German writer of eminence."⁴ Evidently he had forgotten his intention to translate *Fragmente eines Ungenannten* in 1796.

¹ *Letters*, I, 257-258.

² See *Quarterly Rev.*, CLXV, p. 60 seq., *Westminster Rev.*, CLXV, p. 528 seq., and *Edinburgh Rev.*, CLXII, p. 301 seq.

³ *Works*, III, 505-554.

⁴ *Ibid.*, III, p. 525.

On the following day (September 21) Coleridge and Wordsworth visited the poet Klopstock, and had the memorable interview that is reproduced from Wordsworth's notes in Satyrane's third letter.¹ Both poets were disappointed when they perceived Klopstock's ignorance of early German literature, and his uncompromising attitude toward Schiller and other romantic writers. Coleridge told Klopstock that he intended to write a history of German poetry and would gladly translate some of the latter's odes as specimens. Klopstock begged him to do so, in order to atone for the miserable translations that had appeared; but like many other plans of Coleridge's, it was never executed.

On September 23, Coleridge went to Ratzeburg with a letter of introduction from Klopstock, and spent several days in making arrangements to settle there for a protracted stay. During his absence, Wordsworth had two more interviews with the venerable German poet. Coleridge returned on the 27th and left for Ratzeburg on October 1, accompanied by the faithful Chester. Two days later the Wordsworths started for Goslar, where they spent a dreary but industrious winter. Coleridge has given us an interesting account² of his life in the home of the good pastor of Ratzeburg. He applied himself diligently to the study of German and at the same time learned much of German domestic life. He enjoyed the Christmas ceremonials and wrote home the letters which afterwards appeared in *The Friend as Christmas within Doors in the North of Germany*, and *Christmas out of Doors*.³

¹ In using these notes, Coleridge allowed the pronoun of the first person to stand as Wordsworth wrote it, and used the same for himself. The confusion is best overcome by referring to the original notes as printed in Knight's *Life of Wordsworth*, I, 171-177. Satyrane's third letter reproduces Wordsworth's notes of two subsequent interviews with Klopstock, at which Coleridge was not present.

² *Works*, III, p. 300, note; *Letters*, I, 262-288.

³ *Works*, II, 335-338.

Early in January, Coleridge wrote¹ to Poole that he intended to proceed to Göttingen and undertake some lucrative work. He proposed to write a Life of Lessing, with an account of the rise and present state of German literature. Moreover, he declared that he had already written "a little life from three different biographies," and intended to read all of Lessing's works at Göttingen in chronological order. Coleridge left Ratzeburg on February 6, and, after a short stay at Hanover, reached Göttingen on the 12th, carrying letters of introduction to Professors Heyne and Blumenbach. A few days later he matriculated at the University and began serious study. Coleridge's record of his own industry is well known.² His preparation for a "Life of Lessing" was supplemented by extensive reading of metaphysics, which soon held him with a relentless grasp. After three months of study, he joined a small party of friends for the memorable ascent of the Brocken which resulted in a most exquisite literary memorial—his *Fragment of a Journal of a Tour over the Brocken*.³ At Elbingerode, Coleridge wrote the lines beginning, "I stood on Brocken's sovran height" in the inn album. After visiting Blankenburg, Werningerode, Goslar, and Klausthal, the party returned to Göttingen.

On June 23, a farewell supper was tendered to Coleridge and Chester at Professor Blumenbach's. Before leaving for England, they spent several days at Wolfenbüttel, where Coleridge made inquiries concerning Lessing, and made the acquaintance of Professor Zimmermann. They reached England some time during July.

Coleridge had been in Germany somewhat over nine months. What he accomplished there is best summarized in a letter⁴ that he wrote to Josiah Wedgwood. He de-

¹ *Letters*, I, 267-270.

² *Works*, III, 301-303. See also Carlyon, *Early Years and Late Reflections*, I, 31-33, etc.

³ *Miscellanies*, ed. Ashe, pp. 187-197.

⁴ Cottle, *Reminiscences*, pp. 316-317.

clared that he had learned the language and could speak it fluently, though with "hideous" pronunciation; that he had studied the German dialects; that he had attended regularly the lectures on physiology, anatomy, and natural history; that he had collected material for a history of *belles-lettres* in Germany before the time of Lessing; and, finally, that he had made large collections for a "Life of Lessing." He concluded with the significant sentence: "I shall have bought thirty pounds worth of books, chiefly metaphysics and with a view to the one work, to which I hope to dedicate in silence, the prime of my life; but I believe and indeed doubt not, that before Christmas I shall have repaid myself."

It is thus clear, that even before leaving Germany, Coleridge was intent upon that elaborate philosophical *magnum opus* to which he devoted the best portion of his life, but which was never realized to justify his desertion of the poetic muse. His effort to formulate an inclusive, unasailable system was a worthy ambition; yet the attempt was not made without a great sacrifice.

IMMEDIATE RESULTS (1799-1800).

While Coleridge was engaged in his literary and philosophical studies in Germany, he did not altogether abandon poetry. He wrote a small number of original poems, and made half a score of translations from various German poets. Some of the latter were perhaps written after his return to England. Campbell has given the conjectural date (? 1799) to most of them. They are best discussed in the order in which they appear in his edition of Coleridge's poetical works.

When Coleridge sent the original *Hexameters*¹ beginning "William, my teacher, my friend!" to Wordsworth at Goslar, he wrote in the accompanying letter² that "our language is, in some instances, better adapted to these metres than the German." The lines possess no intrinsic merit, and are not all metrically correct. Coleridge's experiment was evidently prompted by the extensive imitation of the metre among German poets. The hexameter *Hymn to the Earth*³ is a somewhat amplified translation, in the original metre, of part of Stolberg's *Hymne an die Erde*. It was regarded as an original poem until the appearance of Freiligrath's Tauchnitz edition (1852) of Coleridge. Freiligrath was likewise the first to show that the *Catullian Hendecasyllabics*⁴ are a free translation of the beginning of Matthisson's *Milesisches Märchen*. Brandl⁵ stated incorrectly that the poem is translated in the metre of the original. Coleridge substituted a dactyl for a two-syllable foot at the

¹ *Poet. Works*, pp. 137-138.

² Knight, *Life of Wordsworth*, I, p. 185.

³ *Poet. Works*, pp. 138-139, 615.

⁴ *Poet. Works*, pp. 140, 616.

⁵ Brandl, *op. cit.*, pp. 264: 249.

beginning of each verse, hence twelve instead of eleven syllables. A variant text appeared in Cottle's *Reminiscences*¹ with the more appropriate title, *The English Duodecasyllable*.

Other translations were for a long time regarded as original poems. The couplets describing *The Homeric Hexameter* and *The Ovidian Elegiac Metre*² respectively were not recognized as translations from Schiller until 1847, and even then the originals were printed in the notes without comment. In the case of *The British Stripling's War-Song*³—a translation of Stolberg's *Lied eines deutschen Knaben*—there was an acknowledgment on the original draft of the poem, which is now in the British Museum, but the indebtedness was not mentioned when the poem was printed in *The Morning Post* and in *The Annual Anthology*. The original was written in ballad-metre. Coleridge preserved the quatrain form and wrote, not "wooden hexameters," as Brandl⁴ says, but a flowing anapæstic tetrameter, with the common trochaic substitution in the first foot of several verses. The lines *On a Cataract*⁵ are an elaboration, rather than a translation of Stolberg's *Unsterblicher Jüngling*.

Occasionally Coleridge was careful to acknowledge his obligations. *Tell's Birthplace*,⁶ a fairly close translation in the original metres of Stolberg's *Bei Wilhelm Tells Geburtsstatte im Kanton Uri*, was first printed in *Sibylline Leaves* (1817) as "Imitated from Stolberg." In the same collection appeared the translation of Schiller's *Dithyrambe* as *The Visit of the Gods, imitated from Schiller*.⁷ Coleridge followed the original quite closely, save that he replaced

¹ Cottle, p. 96.

² *Poet. Works*, pp. 140, 616.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 141, 617.

⁴ Brandl, pp. 263: 248.

⁵ *Poet. Works*, pp. 141-142, 618.

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 142, 618.

⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 142-143, 619.

Schiller's short seventh and eighth lines of each stanza by a single long line. Crabb Robinson recorded¹ that Coleridge quoted Schiller's poem on November 15, 1810, and added: "He has since translated it." This evidently contradicts Campbell's date—? 1799. It is probable that the same date, appended to Coleridge's translation of the first stanza of Mignon's Song from Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister*, is also much too early for that fragment.

*Mutual Passion*² appeared in *The Courier* in 1811 and was reprinted in *Sibylline Leaves* as "a song modernized with some additions from one of our elder poets." Campbell supposed that an English poet was meant, but, in lieu of anything better, accepted Professor Brandl's statement that the poem was an "imitation of the old-fashioned rhymes which introduce Minnesangs Frühling."³ Dr. Garnett pointed out⁴ that the poem was merely a revision of *A Nymph's Passion* from Ben Jonson's *Underwoods*. About half of the verses of Jonson's poem have been "improved."

The *Water Ballad*,⁵ which appeared in *The Athenæum* in 1831, was not included among Coleridge's poems until 1877. Its source was unknown, and Campbell printed it among the German translations, with the date—? 1799. Hutchinson⁶ in 1893 showed that it was a poor translation of E. de Planard's *Barcarolle de Marie*. In Gustav Masson's *La Lyric Française*⁷ the original is dated 1826. Hutchinson suggests that the song may be the sole trace of stage. It is true that in 1812 Coleridge thought of attempting melodrama or comic opera;⁸ but he probably entertained no such plans in 1826 or thereafter.

¹ *Diary*, etc., I, p. 196.

² *Poet. Works*, pp. 143, 619.

³ Brandl, pp. 263: 248.

⁴ *The Athenæum*, 1897, II, p. 885. Cf. *ibid.*, 1898, I, 24.

⁵ *Poet. Works*, pp. 143, 619.

⁶ *The Academy*, 1893, I, p. 481.

⁷ Masson, *op. cit.*, p. 189.

⁸ Crabb Robinson, *Diary*, I, p. 272.

Names,¹ translated from Lessing's *Die Namen*, always appeared in Coleridge's works without acknowledgment to Lessing. Cottle, who printed a varying text of the epigram² recorded that Coleridge expressed his intention of translating the whole of Lessing. Cottle merely smiled and tells us that "Coleridge understood the symbol and smiled in return."

The *Translation of a Passage in Ottfried's Metrical Paraphrase of the Gospel*³ was a direct result of Coleridge's readings in Old High German. Professor Brandl⁴ connected it with the night-scene in *Christabel*, and with the *Christmas Carol* which Coleridge afterwards wrote. Its relation to *Christabel* is based principally on the fact that a line of that poem,

"To shield her and shelter her from the damp air."

appears reflected and distorted in the lines of the translation,

"Blessed! for she shelter'd him
From the damp and chilling air."

The fragment is unrhymed, but is otherwise suggestive of the irregular four-stressed verse of *Christabel*; beyond this there is no connection between the poems. The relation of the fragment to *A Christmas Carol*⁵ is quite evident and does not call for comment.

In a letter of April 23, 1799, Coleridge sent the lines *Something Childish but very Natural*⁶ to his wife. Freiligrath in 1852 was the first to show that the poem was an "imitation" of *Wenn ich ein Vöglein wär*. The first two stanzas are a translation of the German, the third is a free paraphrase which loses the simplicity and charm of its original.

¹*Poet. Works*, p. 144. See *Notes & Queries*, (Fifth) VIII; (Sixth) VIII.

²*Recollections*, etc., II, p. 65.

³*Poet. Works*, pp. 144, 620.

⁴Brandl, *op. cit.*, pp. 262: 247. (Not fully translated.)

⁵*Poet. Works*, pp. 150, 624.

⁶*Ibid.*, pp. 146, 621.

Coleridge translated a large number of epigrams¹ by Lessing and other German writers. The original poems written in Germany are of no great importance. His *Lines Written in the Album at Elbingerode*, though not a poor poem, is distinctly inferior to the prose narrative of the tour. In *Home-Sick*, and *The Day-Dream* he expressed his intense yearning to rejoin his family and friends. Two brief epitaphs, *On an Infant*, complete the list. Compared to Wordsworth's achievement in the uncomfortable retreat at Goslar, the quality and extent of Coleridge's work are disappointing and plainly indicative of his declining interest in poetry.

When Coleridge returned to England in July, 1799, he projected a vast hexameter epic on Mahomet and sought Southey's collaboration. The latter composed over a hundred verses for the epic; Coleridge probably wrote only the fourteen lines² now printed with his poems. The proposed "Life of Lessing" was continually being postponed.³ In July, 1800, he expected to have the "Introduction" in press before Christmas; by October nothing had been done. Finally, in March, 1801, Southey⁴ wrote: "Must Lessing wait for the Resurrection before he receives a new life?" Four years later Southey⁵ informed William Taylor that, although Coleridge had made ample collection for the work, nothing was ever written.

About January, 1800, a brief correspondence between Coleridge and Taylor took place. Coleridge called Taylor's attention to the statue of Bürger which had been erected in Göttingen and mentioned the significant correspondence between Wordsworth and himself in Germany on the merits

¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 443-453.

² *Poet. Works*, p. 139.

³ See *Letters*, I, p. 321; *Life and Corres. of R. Southey*, II, pp. 36, 37, 40; *Cottle's Reminiscences*, pp. 319, 324.

⁴ *Life and Corres.*, II, p. 139.

⁵ *Robberds, Memoir of W. T.*, II, 75-76.

of Bürger, his *Lenore*, and Taylor's version of the poem.¹ He did not regard Bürger as a great poet, but thought that he possessed some of the qualities which Wordsworth denied to him.

At the end of February, 1800, Coleridge urged Southey to edit a "History of Universal Literature" and volunteered to write a chapter on German poetry for it.² In the same letter, he made the first definite mention of the greatest memorial of his interest in German literature—his translation of Schiller's *Wallenstein*—an undertaking of such importance as to warrant its consideration apart from the trifles and fragments that represent the remainder of his translations from the German.

¹ *Ibid.*, I, pp. 294, 313, 318-321. Cf. Brandl, pp. 252: 239. This is apparently the only passage where Coleridge made a definite criticism of *Lenore*. His lack of enthusiasm detracts from its suggested influence.

² *Letters*, I, p. 331.

THE WALLENSTEIN TRANSLATION (1800).

According to a persistent tradition for which Gillman¹ appears to be responsible, Coleridge shut himself up in his lodgings in Buckingham Street, and after six weeks' diligent application to his task, produced his remarkable *Wallenstein* translation. Like so many other literary traditions, the present one is not substantiated by the facts; yet it is more easily explained than Professor Saintsbury's recent misstatement² that the *Wallenstein* translation was begun in Germany.

Campbell³ interpreted Coleridge's remark (in a letter of December 25, 1799) that he gave his "mornings to booksellers' compilations" as evidence that he began to translate *Wallenstein* before the end of 1799; but Coleridge's more explicit reference to these compilations in a letter⁴ written during January, 1800, proves that he did not have *Wallenstein* in mind. Coleridge mentioned Schiller's plays for the first time in a letter⁵ to Southey on February 28, 1800, and as he exchanged frequent letters with Southey about that time, we are perhaps justified in the assumption that the translation was begun shortly before that date; otherwise it would have been mentioned in a previous letter.

Coleridge was living at 21 Buckingham Street when he began the *Wallenstein*; but on March 17, Charles Lamb, who then lived at 36 Chapel Street, wrote: "I am living in a continuous feast. Coleridge has been with me now for nigh three weeks. . . . He is engaged in translations

¹ Gillman, *Life of S. T. C.*, p. 146. See also Traill, p. 72; Brandl, pp. 271-272: 257; and M. B. Benton in *Atlantic Monthly*, LXXIV, p. 99.

² Saintsbury, *Short History of English Literature*, p. 656.

³ Campbell, *Memoir of S. T. C.*, p. 106.

⁴ Cottle, *Reminiscences*, p. 319.

⁵ *Letters*, I, p. 331.

which I hope will keep him this month to come."¹ We do not know when the "continuous feast" came to an end; a month later (April 21) Coleridge was with Wordsworth at Grasmere, whence he wrote to Josiah Wedgwood: "Tomorrow morning I send off the last sheet of my irksome, soul-wearying labour, the translation of Schiller."² It is thus apparent that the task was accomplished in two months or less. No wonder that Coleridge wrote: "These cursed Plays play the devil with me. I have been writing from morning till night, and about half the night too, and yet get on too slowly for the printer."³

The Piccolomini was listed⁴ among the New Publications in April; *The Death of Wallenstein* was published in June—about the time that the original play was published in Germany. The circumstances under which a part of Schiller's trilogy appeared in an English translation before the original was published were first clearly set forth by Professor Brandl. Schiller wrote *Wallenstein* while the Kotzebue craze was at its height in London; there was consequently a good market in England for German plays. Even before *Wallenstein* was completed, arrangements were made with Bell, the English publisher, for a translation to appear simultaneously with the original. An attested copy (signed by Schiller on September 30, 1799) was received by Bell in November. Without communicating with either Schiller or the German publisher, Cotta, Bell sold the manuscript to the Messrs. Longman, who placed it in Coleridge's hands for translation. Schiller did not learn of its publication until September; both translator and publisher were unknown to him, until his correspondence with Cotta⁵ afforded a partial explanation of the somewhat complicated procedure.

¹ Lamb's *Letters*, ed. Ainger, I, p. 115.

² Campbell's *Memoir*, p. 112.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 112.

⁴ *Monthly Magazine*, IX, 379-380.

⁵ *Schillers Briefwechsel mit Cotta*, pp. 396, 398, 405, 424.

The manuscript used by Coleridge was carefully prepared by Schiller and differed in some respects from the text that has since become the standard. Freiligrath made a collation of Coleridge's translation with the manuscript original, and concluded that, with the exception of a few trivial mistakes, Coleridge had rendered a faithful translation.¹ In the Preface to *The Piccolomini* Coleridge mentioned his intention of prefixing a "Life of Wallenstein" to the translation and likewise confessed that he had dilated the original text in two or three short passages. An advertisement at the end of the volume announced, as in press, *The Death of Wallenstein*, also *Wallenstein's Camp*, with an "Essay on the Genius of Schiller." Neither of the last two ever appeared; but *The Death of Wallenstein* was published with an important Preface which accounted for the omission of the prelude, and presented some interesting criticism of Schiller's plays.

The *Wallenstein* translation was unfavorably received by all the literary reviews.² The least unkind was the *Monthly Review*, which called Coleridge "the most rational partisan of the German theatre whose labours have come under our notice." In reply to this characterization, the poet sent a sharp note³ to the editor of the review, disclaiming all interest in German drama and intimating that he did not admire *Wallenstein* itself. We know that after its publication Coleridge called it "a dull, heavy play"⁴ and spoke of the "unutterable disgust"⁵ which he suffered while translating it.

¹ *Athenæum*, 1861, I, pp. 633, 663, 797, and II, p. 284. In a recent valuable article on *Coleridge's Wallenstein-Uebersetzung* (in *Englische Studien*, XXXI, 182-239), Paul Machule gives the results of a careful comparison of translation and original, showing numerous instances in which Coleridge departed, intentionally or otherwise, from the text.

² *Monthly Mag.*, X, p. 611; *Monthly Rev.*, XXXIII, n. s., 127-131; *British Critic*, XVIII, 542-545; *Critical Rev.*, XXX, n. s., 175-185.

³ *Monthly Rev.*, XXXIII, n. s., p. 336.

⁴ Cottle, *Reminiscences*, p. 324.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 325.

But a little later he wrote: "Prolix and crowded and dragging as it is, it is yet quite a model for its judicious management of the sequence of the scenes."¹

After several years had passed, Coleridge held his *Wallenstein* in higher esteem. He thanked Sir Walter Scott for quoting it with applause,² and told Allsop³ that the translation was "a specimen of his happiest attempt, during the prime manhood of his intellect, before he had been buffeted by adversity or crossed by fatality." Notwithstanding Coleridge's failure to make *Wallenstein* popular in England, an anonymous translation of the *Piccolomini's* (*sic*) appeared⁴ in London in 1805, but has thus far eluded the bibliographers. Carlyle was unable to procure Coleridge's *Wallenstein* in 1823-1824 while writing his *Life of Schiller*, but the original edition is no longer a rarity.

Coleridge's translation has steadily grown in popular favor. Scott was probably the first to assert that it was a greater performance than the original—a rare tribute which still obtains in the recent literary histories by Professor Saintsbury⁵ and Mr. Gosse.⁶ There is at least one dissentient voice to Saintsbury's statement that "all but the Germans and some of them" regard Coleridge's version as greater than Schiller's original. John M. Robertson, in a singularly abusive essay⁷ on Coleridge, speaks of the "translations, which bulk so largely were hardly worth reprinting and will certainly cease to be read by Englishmen before the originals, despite Professor Brandl's strange endorsement of the English claim, ascribed first to Scott, that Coleridge had improved on Schiller."

¹ C. K. Paul's *William Godwin*, II, p. 8.

² See *Works*, ed. Shedd, II, 391-392. Cf. *Guy Mannering*, chaps. III and IV.

³ Allsop *Letters, Conversations, etc.*, p. 65.

⁴ See *British Critic*, XXV, 684-685; *Monthly Rev.*, L, n. s., p. 329.

⁵ Saintsbury, *A Short History of English Literature*, p. 656.

⁶ Gosse, *Modern English Literature*, p. 284.

⁷ Robertson, *New Essays Toward a Critical Method*, p. 186.

The English version of Brandl's "strange endorsement"—a literal translation of the original—reads as follows: "One can understand the view taken by the English when they maintain that Coleridge's 'Wallenstein' is superior to Schiller's. The wonder is why they occupied twenty years before arriving at that opinion." This appreciation of the English point of view does not necessarily imply its acceptance by Professor Brandl. Again, the *Wallenstein*, far from being "hardly worth reprinting," will always rank among the few accomplished projects in a life full of plans and visionary undertakings. The least that can justly be claimed for it is that it stands as high as the German version in the English reader's estimation. The reader who turns to the original to find greater dramas or a richer poetic treatment will be disappointed. In spite of Mr. Robertson's strictures, the *Wallenstein* will continue to be regarded as one of Coleridge's great achievements.¹

¹ An edition-de-luxe of Coleridge's *Wallenstein* appeared recently (1902).

THE YEARS OF UNREST (1800-1816).

In the autumn of 1800, Coleridge wrote the second part of *Christabel*. Lamb's reference¹ to Coleridge's book, "that drama in which Got-fader performs," has been accepted as sufficient evidence that Coleridge possessed a copy of the 1790 *Faust-Fragment*; yet it is well to remember that the *Prolog in Himmel* is not to be found in the *Fragment*. A writer in the *Edinburgh Review*² fancied that he saw *Faust* influence in the metre and "wild unearthly interest" of the first part of *Christabel*. No one has undertaken to substantiate that influence; but Professor Brandl³ has pointed out *Lenore* influence in *Christabel* and *The Ballad of the Dark Ladie*. In both poems there is some ground for entertaining such a theory—notably in the characterization of Lady Geraldine and of the Dark Ladie; but the resemblance is at best so slight that no stress can be laid upon it.

The metre of *Christabel* has been vaguely attributed to *Faust*, and to "mediæval German poetry."⁴ When Coleridge published the poem in 1816, he declared that the metre was not irregular, but was founded on a new principle; namely, counting the accents instead of syllables. This careless statement has led to some controversy. Coleridge assuredly knew that the metre of *Christabel* represented no new principle. His poem, *The Raven*, was written in the same metre, and was sent to *The Morning Post* in 1798 with a letter stating that the poem must be read in recitative, as the second eclogue of Spenser's *Shepherd's Calendar*.⁵ In

¹ Lamb's *Letters*, ed. Ainger, I, p. 121.

² *Edinburgh Rev.*, LXI, 146-147.

³ Brandl, pp. 224: 211 and 230: 216.

⁴ T. S. Perry in *Atlantic Monthly*, XL, p. 135.

⁵ *Poet. Works*, p. 475.

his Preface to *The Death of Wallenstein*, Coleridge noted that the same metre was employed by Schiller in his prelude. Whatever may be the analogy between the metre of *Christabel* and German *Knüttelvers*, it is evident that Coleridge was thoroughly familiar with the irregularly four-stressed line—the so-called “doggerel tetrameter”—in our older literature, and that there is no ground for referring his use of that metre to a direct German influence.

Coleridge at first declared¹ that he would not publish the letters descriptive of his German tour; yet, toward the end of 1800, he made several references² to such a volume and spoke of it as “in the printer’s hands.” Of course, it did not appear. During the next few years of struggling and distress, he determined to devote the remainder of his life to metaphysics; at the same time he devised various projects to satisfy his immediate needs. In 1802 he undertook a translation of Gessner’s *Der Erste Schiffer*, wrote³ to William Sotheby on July 19, that he had translated the First Book into 530 lines of blank verse and that the Second Book would be a hundred lines less. A month later he wrote that he had finished the translation, and that the publisher could have a copy at any time after a week’s notice. Nothing more is heard of it; and apparently no copy was found among Coleridge’s papers. About the same time⁴ he proposed to translate Voss’s *Idylls* into English hexameters, but nothing came of the project.

In September, 1802, Coleridge’s *Hymn before Sunrise in the Vale of Chamouni* was printed in *The Morning Post*, accompanied by a note⁵ which would lead the reader to suppose that the verses had been composed at Chamouni. At

¹ Letters, I, p. 317.

² *Ibid.*, I, pp. 337 and 342; also Cottle, *Reminiscences*, p. 327.

³ Letters, I, pp. 369–372, 376–378, 397.

⁴ *Ibid.*, I, p. 398.

⁵ Max Förster, in *The Academy*, XLIX, 529–530, showed that this note was a free translation of the authoress’ note to the original poem.

no time did Coleridge acknowledge his very evident indebtedness to Frederike Brun's *Chamouny beym Sonnenaufgange*. The plagiarism was first pointed out by De Quincey¹ shortly after Coleridge's death, and acknowledged by Henry Nelson Coleridge,² who, however, denied any "ungenerous wish" on Coleridge's part to conceal the obligation. He continued: "The words and images that are taken are taken bodily and without alteration, and not the slightest art is used . . . to disguise the fact of any community between the two poems." Dykes Campbell has well said³ that this excuse would have been fair, though hardly sufficient, if Coleridge had borrowed from Goethe or Schiller; in this case he was imitating an authoress of obscure, almost local, reputation. Coleridge expanded the poem to more than four times its original length, and even De Quincey in bringing the charge of plagiarism admitted that the poet had "created the dry bones of the German outline into the fullness of life." The acknowledgment of his indebtedness would in no wise have detracted from the merit of his performance; but its intentional omission precludes the possibility of offering a satisfactory explanation of the poet's motive.

The next few years of Coleridge's life were full of sorrow. His trip to Malta and Rome (1804-1806) is as yet an obscure chapter in his biography. At Rome he met Ludwig Tieck for the first time. Upon his return he made arrangements for a course of lectures, which, after some delay, was delivered during the spring of 1808. From the meagre reports of these lectures preserved by Crabb Robinson,⁴ Professor Brandl detected the influence of Herder's *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte*, of Kant's *Kritik der Urtheilskraft*, and of the *Hamburgische Dramaturgie*;

¹ Tait's *Edinburgh Mag.*, September, 1834.

² Preface to *Table Talk* (1835). See also *Works*, VI, p. 245.

³ *Poet. Works*, p. 630. Also *Memoir*, p. 140, n. 1.

⁴ *Diary*, I, pp. 171-172. See *Works*, IV., pp. 220-227.

though this indebtedness was not so definitely emphasized in the German text as in Lady Eastlake's translation.¹ Coleridge may possibly have been indebted to Kant's *Metaphysik der Sitten* for his remarks on the education of children. He evidently drew from Schiller's *Ueber naive und sentimentalische Dichtung*, and in one lecture followed Herder's *Kalligone* so closely that Robinson's notes "read almost like an index to the first chapter of that work."

During the summer of 1808 Coleridge announced² that he was engaged upon a "very free translation with large additions, etc., of the masterly work for which poor Palm was murdered." The work that caused Palm's martyrdom was the anti-Napoleonic pamphlet, *Deutschland in seiner tiefsten Erniedrigung*; but Coleridge evidently referred to Ernst Moritz Arndt's *Geist der Zeit* which was written at the same time (1806) against Napoleon. In 1810 Coleridge declared³ that the latter work had been delivered to him for translation, "under authority of one of the Royal Family"; that when he was "ready for the press," he informed the bookseller who had sent the volume, but he received no answer. A translation by P. W[ill] entitled *Spirit of the Times* appeared in 1808; but what has become of Coleridge's translation? Would the translator of a work of over four hundred pages cast it aside, simply because his first letter brought no response from a bookseller? In the absence of further information, we must add this title to the list of Coleridge's projected works which Joseph Cottle⁴ drew up with perhaps not the best intentions, but which is far from being exhaustive.

Between March, 1809, and June, 1810, Coleridge published at very irregular intervals his literary and political weekly, *The Friend*, which is now best known in the "rifac-

¹ Brandl, pp. 316-317: 296-298.

² *Letters*, II, p. 530.

³ *Essays on his Own Times*, II, p. 670, note.

⁴ Cottle, *Reminiscences*, p. 347.

ciamento" prepared in 1818. The "literary amusements" used by Coleridge to relieve the more serious essays are of some interest in the present connection. At the first "landing place" Coleridge related the good old story of the appearance of the arch-fiend to Luther on the Wartburg. A writer in the *Edinburgh Review* (1835) insisted¹ that Coleridge had plagiarized this incident from Goethe's *Faust*. Professor Brandl² endorsed the claim, declaring that Coleridge reproduced the setting of the *Studirzimmer*, "unceremoniously" substituted Luther for Faust and the devil in general for Mephistopheles in particular. Even a superficial comparison of Coleridge's words with the cited scene in *Faust* will reveal the fact that whatever resemblances exist between them are essential and in no wise peculiar to Coleridge's version of the time-honored tradition. Both Luther and Faust are studying the Bible by a midnight lamp in a chamber and to each a devil appears; beyond that there is no similarity between the two.

At the second "landing-place," Coleridge related the harrowing story of Maria Eleonora Schöning, the daughter of a "Nuremberg wire-drawer." He wrote: "The account was published in the city in which the event took place, and in the same year I read it, when I was in Germany, and the impression made on my memory was so deep, that though I relate it in my own language and with my own feelings, and in reliance on the fidelity of my recollection, I dare vouch for the accuracy of the narration in all important particulars." Southey³ regarded the story as the work of "some German horrorist," but Coleridge insisted⁴ that the facts had been confirmed. Besides this story, the Second Landing-place contained the two descriptions, *Christmas within Doors in the North of Germany* and *Christmas out*

¹ *Edinburgh Rev.*, LXI, p. 147.

² Brandl, pp. 325: 305.

³ Knight, *Memorials of Coleridge*, II, pp. 87-88.

⁴ *Letters*, II, p. 555.

of *Doors*, both rewritten from letters sent from Ratzeburg in 1799. *Satyrane's Letters* appeared in the original *Friend* but were omitted in 1818 as they had been introduced into *Biographia Literaria* (1817).

Crabb Robinson became personally acquainted with Coleridge in November, 1810, and from that date his Diary contains numerous interesting records¹ of Coleridge's critical remarks upon German authors and philosophers. Robinson probably attended the whole series of Coleridge's 1811-12 lectures; but the selections thus far printed from his voluminous diaries do not mention all of them. Professor Brandl² emphasized Coleridge's indebtedness to Jean Paul throughout the first eight lectures; though Coleridge himself declared,³ that he did not see Paul's *Vorschule der Aesthetik* before 1817. In the ninth lecture⁴ Coleridge said: "Yesterday afternoon a friend left a book for me by a German critic, of which I have only had time to read a small part; but what I did read I approved, and I should be disposed to applaud the work much more highly, were it not that in so doing I should, in a manner, applaud myself. The sentiments and opinions are coincident with those to which I gave utterance in my lectures at the Royal Institution. It is not a little wonderful that so many ages have elapsed since the time of Shakespeare, and that it should remain for foreigners first to feel truly and to appreciate justly his mighty genius." The "friend" was evidently Robinson, and the book was August von Schlegel's *Vorlesungen über dramatische Kunst und Litteratur*, which had recently appeared. At that time Coleridge did not hesitate to bestow even extravagant praise⁵ upon Schlegel's criticism; in 1818, under the stress of the charge of plagiarism, he retracted some of the statements made in 1811-12.

¹ *Diary*, I, pp. 195, 244, etc.

² Brandl, pp. 334-340: 316-321.

³ *Letters*, II, p. 683.

⁴ *Lectures*, ed. T. Ashe, pp. 126-127.

⁵ *Works*, IV, p. 479.

Coleridge's attitude toward Goethe appeared inexplicable to Robinson. He recorded that Coleridge "conceded to Goethe universal talent, but felt a want of moral life to be the defect of his poetry,"¹ and subsequently that "Coleridge denied merit to 'Torquato Tasso' . . . adducing at the same time the immoral tendency of Goethe's works."² However in August, 1812, Robinson read³ to Coleridge a number of scenes out of the new *Faust* and "he now acknowledged the genius of Goethe" as never before. At the same time, he regarded Goethe's want of religion and enthusiasm as an irreparable defect.

It may have been Southey or Byron who suggested to the publisher Murray that Coleridge should be invited to translate *Faust* into English. In August, 1814, the proposal reached Coleridge indirectly (through Robinson and Charles Lamb), and the poet wrote a long letter⁴ to Murray, deploring the necessity of bringing his intellect to the market, but expressing a desire to attempt the translation, and likewise a translation of Voss's *Luise* as soon as he learned the publisher's terms. He also mentioned that he would need all of Goethe's works to prepare the "preliminary critical essay." Murray offered Coleridge one hundred pounds for the translation and preliminary analysis, and hoped that the manuscript would be ready by November. Coleridge regarded the offer as an "inadequate remuneration" for the work, but mentioned the terms upon which he was willing to undertake the work for a hundred guineas. Murray's answer has not been preserved, and there was no further correspondence on the subject. Almost two decades later⁵ Coleridge recalled the negotiations and said that he "never put pen to paper as a translator of Faust."

¹ *Diary*, I, p. 195.

² *Ibid.*, I, p. 250.

³ *Ibid.*, I, p. 254.

⁴ Smiles, *Memoir of John Murray*, pp. 297-302.

⁵ *Works*, VI, p. 425. (*Table Talk*, February 16, 1833.)

After the failure to reach an understanding with Murray, Coleridge devoted much of his time to the metaphysical *magnum opus* which was "to contain all knowledge and proclaim all philosophy." His play, *Remorse* (1813)—a reworking of *Osorio* with a few interpolated passages from his *Wallenstein*—had been successfully produced. He now began his *Biographia Literaria* and the collected edition of his poems which afterwards appeared as *Sibylline Leaves*. Both of these were finished before the end of 1815, though they were not published until two years later. Next he wrote his dramatic entertainment, *Zapolya*, and, by the aid of Lord Byron, arranged with Murray for the publication of *Christabel*. In April, 1816, shortly before the appearance of *Christabel*, Coleridge returned to London and began his long residence at the home of Dr. Gillman on Highgate Hill.

THE SAGE OF HIGHGATE (1816-1834).

The last period of Coleridge's life was mainly devoted to the development of his elaborate philosophical system, though he was constantly conceiving literary projects that were often interesting and important. His suggestion (1816) for the establishment of a "review of old books" was carried out four years later by others in the *Retrospective Review*; similarly, in his proposal (1816) to undertake a periodical¹ dealing with "the real state and value of German Literature from Gellert and Klopstock to the present year," he anticipated several foreign quarterlies by at least a decade. The appearance of *Biographia Literaria* and *Sibylline Leaves* brought Coleridge prominently forward once more. Present interest in the former centres in the critique on Maturin's tragedy, *Bertram*. In the course of his denunciation of the extravagant German school which Maturin had emulated, Coleridge paid sincere tribute to the influence of Lessing toward highest ideals of dramatic art. He wrote: "It was Lessing who first introduced the name and the works of Shakespeare to the admiration of the Germans; and I should not perhaps go too far, if I add, that it was Lessing who first proved to all thinking men, even to Shakespeare's own countrymen, the true nature of his apparent irregularities." Coleridge then proceeded to belabor Kotzebue and the minor exponents of the horrific drama in the style in which his own works were often assailed in the reviews. Save in this critique, there are few references² to German authors in the *Biographia Literaria*. The most interesting contents of the work in this connection are *Satyran's Letters* and the account of the visit to Germany.

¹ See Campbell, *Memoir*, p. 224.

² *Works*, III, pp. 378, 435, 474, etc.

In 1817 Ludwig Tieck arrived in London and renewed his acquaintance with Coleridge. He confessed to Crabb Robinson¹ that he had "no high opinion of Coleridge's critique" but admired his "glorious conceptions about Shakespeare." Coleridge gave Tieck a letter² of introduction to Southey, writing that as a poet, critic and moralist, Tieck stood next in reputation to Goethe. However, Coleridge was apparently unacquainted with Tieck's works, save *Sternbald's Wanderungen*, which he criticized unfavorably as an imitation of Heinse's *Ardinghello*.³

The 1818 course of lectures was the immediate cause of the imputed plagiarism from Schlegel. Coleridge at once declared in his own defense that his original utterances upon Shakespeare antedated those of Schlegel and that he had established and applied every principle of merit in Schlegel's work.⁴ The latter claim was wholly unwarranted and can be explained only by the lecturer's exaggerated zeal in attempting to refute the charge. Coleridge was so embittered by the imputation that he rescinded a tribute which he had previously paid to German criticism and involved himself in a flat contradiction. He sneered at Wordsworth for having "affirmed in *print* that a German critic *first* taught us to think correctly concerning Shakespeare,"⁵ thus forgetting or ignoring the fact that he himself had said practically the same thing in his critique on *Bertram*,⁶ and still earlier in the ninth lecture of the 1811-12 series. Irrespective of the Coleridge-Schlegel controversy, Wordsworth's remark was justified on the strength of what Lessing had written in his *Litteraturbriefe* and the *Hamburgische*

¹ *Diary*, I, pp. 360-366.

² *Letters*, II, pp. 670-671.

³ *Ibid.*, II, pp. 680-684.

⁴ *Works*, IV, pp. 17, 457, etc.

⁵ Essay Supplementary to the Preface to Wordsworth's *Poems*, (1815). See *Poet. Works of Wordsworth*, ed. Morley, pp. 867-868.

⁶ *Works*, III, p. 557.

Dramaturgie before the other two critics were born. Coleridge evidently misinterpreted the utterance as a tribute to Schlegel and was accordingly incensed. Most critics will agree with Sidney Lee¹ that there is "much to be said for Wordsworth's general view." It is clear that Coleridge was unjust to Schlegel after the charge of plagiarism had been brought against him; but he could never have made a deliberate denial of his obligation to Lessing.

However, certain critics² have gone too far in emphasizing Lessing's "discovery" of Shakespeare, and have thus fostered the erroneous impression that Shakespeare was forgotten in England until the Germans rehabilitated him in more than his former glory. Professor Körting³ warned us against a literal interpretation of Hettner's term "Die Wiedererweckung Shakespeare's," and Professor Macmechan has more specifically refuted⁴ the statement in Phelps' *English Romantic Movement*, concerning the neglect of Shakespeare during the Augustan epoch. Such facts do not detract from the glory of German criticism, but are of more real service than the unreasonable claims of enthusiasts in establishing the measure of its contribution to Shakespeare's fame. Sidney Lee⁵ aptly summarized the matter in these words: "In its inception the æsthetic school owed much to the methods of Schlegel and other admiring critics of Shakespeare in Germany. But Coleridge in his *Notes and Lectures* and Hazlitt in his *Characters of Shakespeare's Plays* are the best representatives of the æsthetic school in this or any other country."

There is small probability of our ever arriving at a satisfactory knowledge of Coleridge's exact indebtedness to Schlegel.⁶ Sara Coleridge's edition of her father's lectures

¹ Lee, *Life of William Shakespeare*, pp. 333, n. 1, and 344, n. 1.

² Herford, *Age of Wordsworth*, p. XXV; Brandl, pp. 317: 298.

³ Körting, *Grundriss der Gesch. der eng. Lit.* (3d ed.), p. 309.

⁴ *Modern Language Notes*, IX, p. 148.

⁵ Lee, *Life of Shakespeare*, p. 333.

⁶ See *Works*, III, pp. xi-xlii and VI, pp. 242-253.

supplies the parallel passages from Schlegel in the notes, but our conclusions must be inevitably biassed by our point of view. There is nothing incredible in the idea that the two critics developed their material simultaneously and without any direct inter-relation. Lessing had struck the key-note of the new criticism; its development naturally followed in a certain loosely defined method, whether at the hands of Schlegel or Coleridge. At the same time, it is evident that after Schlegel's lectures came under Coleridge's notice, the latter did not disdain to borrow an occasional thought from the German critic without making acknowledgment of his obligation. Yet Professor Herford¹ is hardly justified in calling Schlegel "Coleridge's master"—an enviable title that might have been more properly bestowed upon Lessing.

In 1819 Coleridge was invited to contribute to *Blackwood's Magazine*, but submitted nothing save his sonnet *Fancy in Nubibus* (which was partly taken from Stolberg's *An das Meer*) and some rambling literary correspondence² which promised, among other things, a life of the poet Hölty, with specimens of his poems translated and imitated in English verse. This promise was broken; but during 1823 Coleridge began to select the choice passages from the works of Archbishop Leighton, which, enriched with his own corollaries and notes, appeared two years later as *Aids to Reflection* and won for him a considerable following among English and American divines. Notwithstanding its slow sale, the book reached an audience including such men as Julius Hare, Frederick Denison Maurice and John Sterling, whose influence was widespread and significant in the religious history of the century. Carlyle, whose *Life of Schiller* and translation of *Wilhelm Meister* had won him a place in the Highgate circle, asserted that without Coleridge there would have been no Tractarian movement.³

¹ *Age of Wordsworth*, p. 77.

² See *Works*, IV, pp. 402-435.

³ Campbell, *Memoir*, pp. 268-269.

Coleridge's declining years were crowned with a peace which he had not known before. He labored diligently and dictated long passages of his philosophical system to his faithful disciples. In 1828 he accompanied Wordsworth and his daughter on a six weeks' tour along the Rhine.¹ At Godesburg they met Niebuhr, Becker, August Schlegel, and other "illuminati" of Bonn. Coleridge praised Schlegel's Shakespeare translation and was in turn complimented upon the beauty and fidelity of his *Wallenstein* version; but the meeting exerted no definite influence upon either critic. Coleridge's literary career was practically over and he did not expect to find any further stimulus for his philosophical labors.

The invaluable *Table Talk* of the last twelve years, for which we are indebted to Henry Nelson Coleridge, records many interesting criticisms of German writers. Coleridge spoke highly of Fouque's *Undine*,² and repeated his qualified appreciation of Goethe's *Faust*.³ He still admired Schiller more than Goethe, but gave first place to the "absolutely perfect" prose style of Lessing.⁴ These critical fragments, uttered toward the close of a life teeming with many and varied activities, reveal at once how imperfect Coleridge's knowledge of German literature had been. He had not kept pace with its development, as he had not deemed it of sufficient importance for the ends which he had in view. His immediate interest had shifted to the German philosophers, since their writings were more nearly associated with his own great life-work.

The *magnum opus* was destined never to appear. After the death of Coleridge in July, 1834, his literary executor, Dr. Joseph Henry Green, turned over the literary and critical remains to Henry Nelson Coleridge, some theological

¹ Campbell, *Memoir*, p. 264.

² *Works*, VI, p. 325.

³ *Works*, VI, pp. 421-424.

⁴ *Ibid*, VI, p. 425.

papers to Hare and Sterling, and undertook by himself the heroic task of completing the philosophical system. He devoted the remaining twenty-eight years of his life to the work, leaving behind a *Spiritual Philosophy* (1865) which clearly proved the futility of Coleridge's desire to formulate a comprehensive system of philosophy to include all knowledge and to interpret the teachings of previous thinkers in the light of his exalted and harmonious scheme of Christianity.

THE GERMAN INFLUENCE ON COLERIDGE.

Coleridge's career presents one of the most interesting and diversified narratives in the annals of English letters. His wide intellectual range, his faculty for projecting innumerable visionary schemes, and the many inexplicable contradictions in his life combine to create an elusive and tantalizing personality, which will not conform to the usual generalizations of the critics. We have so few authoritative utterances concerning his real significance because so few minds have the comprehensive training to appreciate fully his power in the varied fields of his activity.

His education, especially his omnivorous reading, prepared him for his desultory but productive career which resulted in such rich contribution to our store of the True and the Beautiful. Between the "deep and sweet intonations" of the "inspired charity-boy" at Christ's Hospital, and the last broken discourses of the "sage of Highgate" stretches a half century replete with bright hopes and bitter disappointments—a lifetime of dreams and despair. Like many other youthful enthusiasts, Coleridge manifested an early impulse to labor for the amelioration of mankind. The pantisocratic scheme was the first significant indication of his ambition to become a social reformer; but the ardor of its inception eventually subsided into a quiet recognition of its futility. About the same time the translations of Schiller's early plays attracted his attention and enlisted his sympathies in the attack upon wrong and oppression. The lecture-platform seemed the easiest means of approach to the public that Coleridge longed to reach, but he also wrote such poems as *Religious Musings*, which served at once as a common vehicle for his radical theology and his revolutionary tenets.

After he became acquainted with Wordsworth a great change was wrought in Coleridge's attitude toward poetry. Moreover, the influence was reciprocal; it would be difficult to determine which of the two profited most by their intimacy. The *Lyrical Ballads* were planned, written and published; but the reviewers united in censuring the iconoclasts who had overthrown the almost defunct literary traditions to offer the unprepared public a new ideal of poetic art.

Then followed the visit to Germany—a mere incident in the life of Wordsworth, but the turning point in Coleridge's career. Poetry had failed to afford the desired influence, and Coleridge saw brighter possibilities in a devotion to metaphysics. He gradually drew away from his Unitarianism toward orthodox religion and from the work of Lessing he drew the stimulus for his own subsequent criticism. Schiller and the rest of the literati were near at hand, yet he made no attempt to see them. He had gone to Germany as a poet; he returned as a critic and philosopher.

It is true that Coleridge was interested in criticism and philosophy before his German tour, and that he wrote beautiful poetry after his return; but that fact makes the distinction between the two interests no less important. Scholars have frequently deplored the consequences of Coleridge's visit to Germany. They have declared¹ that his two evil spirits were the laudanum bottle and his dreary German metaphysical books, and that the latter were more fatal than the drug. They have condemned² the sojourn at Göttingen as the poet's death-knell. The imaginative mind of Francis Thompson³ pictured Coleridge "submerged and feebly struggling in opium-darkened oceans of German philosophy." Coleridge himself thought⁴ that he would have done better

¹ *Quarterly Rev.*, CLXV, p. 69.

² *Westminster Rev.*, CLXV, p. 528.

³ *Academy*, LI, p. 180.

⁴ *Works*, III, p. 152.

by continuing "to pluck the flowers and reap the harvest from the cultivated surface, instead of delving in the unwholesome quicksilver mines of metaphysical lore." However, the die had been cast. Throughout the remainder of his life he engendered much profound thought and gave utterance to brilliant literary criticism; but rarely did he sing in the strain of *Christabel* and *Kubla Khan*.

Coleridge's knowledge of German authors was very uneven and, in spite of his catholicity of spirit, he failed to grasp the real significance of Germany's literary revival. His inability to understand the greatness of Goethe has been variously explained by the critics; but we need scarcely enumerate the reasons that have been suggested for that lack of sympathy which even Crabb Robinson failed to fathom. He always acknowledged Goethe's "exquisite taste," but objected to the impersonal tone that smacked of insincerity. It is vain to conjecture what Coleridge might have made of *Faust* had he undertaken its translation; considering the repugnance with which he completed *Wallenstein*, his dislike for Goethe would not have prevented him from producing a *Faust* that would have been in every respect worthy of its original.

Coleridge's indebtedness to German writers was twofold, embracing his literary obligation to Lessing, Schiller, and Schlegel, and his philosophical affiliations with Kant, Fichte, and Schelling. The influence of Gessner, Bürger, and even of Jean Paul was comparatively slight. How much of his criticism Coleridge owed to Schlegel is difficult to determine. Under the stress of the charge of plagiarism, Coleridge asserted an independence of Schlegel which he could only partly substantiate. On the other hand, in developing the general ideas indicated by Lessing, both critics would naturally coincide in certain utterances, with no nearer interdependence than their common obligation to Lessing.

Schiller's influence belonged principally to Coleridge's

earlier years and suffered a speedy eclipse. This revulsion of feeling is easily explained by the fact that Coleridge knew only the Schiller of the revolutionary dramas, and before he visited Germany he had passed into a more conservative stage of existence. Lessing exerted the strongest of the purely literary influences on Coleridge, affording him a substantial basis for his subsequent Shakespeare criticism. The influence of Kant, Fichte, and Schelling is manifest throughout Coleridge's philosophical utterances. At times he sought to deny any indebtedness to German thinkers, but his familiarity with their principal works is beyond question.

It is not a difficult task to read a great amount of German influence into Coleridge's work by insisting on the misleading doctrine that general similarity of thought necessarily implies direct connection. The success of a study in comparative literature on that basis is limited only by the critic's store of reading and his memory. If he is intimately acquainted with the respective literatures, he can cite a greater number of those "deadly parallels" that are so rarely fatal. Acting upon Solomon's terse observation on the antiquity of all things, he can trace the genealogy of literary thefts to the first moments of recorded time. Fortunately, all criticism does not follow the road that leads to the primeval chaos. At the unveiling (1885) of Thorneycroft's bust of Coleridge in Westminster Abbey, James Russell Lowell alluded¹ to Coleridge's critical obligations to Lessing, Schiller and Schlegel, but emphasized the indebtedness to his own sympathetic and penetrative imagination. There is a healthy tone in the criticism that pays homage to the thought-creating power of the gifted mind, and does not insist upon a literary influence without ample cause.

Coleridge's intellectual equipment was the result of long years of study and meditation, resulting in a liberal and

¹ *Literary and Political Addresses*, p. 71.

comprehensive culture. He was thoroughly familiar with English writers, notably the Elizabethan dramatists and the churchmen of the seventeenth century; he read ancient and modern philosophy, the classics, German, and Italian; finally, his pamphlets and newspaper articles reveal his live interest in current affairs and his intimate knowledge of contemporary politics. In return for what literature had done for him, Coleridge gave the world a fair measure of poetry that stands unsurpassed in our language for its exquisite melody and rhythm; a corpus of literary criticism as vital and influential as any that an English mind has evolved; and a disjointed but inspiring attempt at a system of Christian philosophy which brought some of the profoundest theologians of England and America into the ranks of his disciples. However much we may lament the physical and moral stagnation that prevented him from achieving more, that which was accomplished must ever command our admiration.

It is true that Coleridge's life was a career of unfulfilled plans. The philosophical scheme, to which he devoted so many precious years, is an incompletable fragment; his critical utterances are disjointed and several of his best poems are unfinished. The same fatality pursued his numerous plans; many were not even begun. In his relations with German literature alone, Coleridge projected sixteen works, only one of which—the *Wallenstein* translation—was ever achieved; and even in that instance he abandoned the *Prelude* and the proposed lives of *Wallenstein* and *Schiller*.

Had Coleridge written a tithe of the works that he planned, he would rank to-day as the peer of Goethe for his catholicity of spirit and range of intellectual interest. The present generation refuses to accept Coleridge at the rating of his intimate contemporaries; even the testimony of Lamb, Wordsworth, Southey, De Quincey, Robinson, Hazlitt and the rest is insufficient to counteract the influence of his own

apparent lethargy. Southey¹ was prophetic when he declared: "All other men whom I have ever known are mere children to him, and yet all is palsied by a total want of moral strength. He will leave nothing behind him to justify the opinions of his friends to the world." Again, somewhat later he wrote: "It vexes and grieves me to the heart that when he is gone, as go he will, nobody will believe what a mind goes with him—how infinitely and ten thousand-thousand-fold the mightiest of his generation."

Coleridge was not only unappreciated by the public in his own day, but is largely misunderstood even now. Our modern taste exalts a few inspired poems and certain luminous critical utterances—the rest is neglected. Need we be reminded that a critic² of Coleridge's time declared that *Christabel* was fit only for the inmates of Bedlam; that the publication of such a "rhapsody of delirium" was "an insult offered to the public understanding"? Yet in our day many go to the opposite extreme and see nothing beyond the few great poems. It is no reflection on the merits of *The Ancient Mariner* to refuse assent to the recent question: "Who would not give all of Coleridge's prose writings for another twenty pages of poetry like *The Ancient Mariner*?"³ Nor does it seem too extravagant to deprecate the reckless and flippant criticism⁴ that tells us that Coleridge "had the impudence to die in his sixty-third year with nothing to show for his life but a tiny handful of poems, some of which he had not even the grace to finish." To critics of this stamp, Coleridge is merely an unfortunate visionary, who produced a few beautiful rhythmical fragments and spent the rest of his life in compiling dreary metaphysical books.

The story of Coleridge's intellectual development awaits the worthy pen of a critic whose conclusions will stem effec-

¹ Robberds, *Memoir of William Taylor*, I, pp. 455, 462.

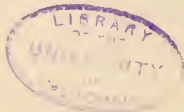
² *Monthly Mag.*, XLVI, p. 408.

³ Dawson, *Makers of Modern Poetry*, p. 80.

⁴ Le Gallienne, *Retrospective Reviews*, II, p. 58.

tively the tide of biassed and superficial criticism. All the material for such an analysis has not yet been given to the world. Many of his letters are unpublished, the prose works are, for the most part, badly edited, and he still lacks a biography to serve as a fitting memorial of his greatness. The last statement must not be interpreted as a reflection upon the merits of the trustworthy memoir by the late James Dykes Campbell, whose exactness and untiring industry in scholarly research have thrown light on many obscure passages in Coleridge's career. The needed biography will exceed the scope of Campbell's narrative; it will describe in more detail Coleridge's development and his influence upon his intellectual and artistic environment. It is this biography that we now await from the pen of the poet's grandson, Mr. Ernest Hartley Coleridge.

Criticism has attempted to estimate Coleridge's greatness from diverse points of view. As a philosopher, he enjoys an honor fostered by the praise of such eminent divines as Hare, Irving, Maurice, Kingsley, and Marsh. His fame as a critic has been generally recognized since the days when large audiences flocked to the rooms of the London Philosophical Society to enjoy his dreamy, rhapsodic eloquence. Miss Wylie's *Evolution of Modern English Criticism* does justice to Coleridge's achievement in establishing the highest critical traditions in our literature. As a poet, Coleridge has been lauded in the golden stream of Mr. Swinburne's prose, and eulogy cannot expect to transcend the ornate and exuberant fancy of that appreciation. Approach Coleridge from what point of view we will, whether as philosopher, critic, or poet, we find him to be one of the most suggestive and stimulating personalities of his century. The infirmities of the man belong to the past and lie beyond our judgment; but the glorious heritage is ours, to honor and esteem as best we can.



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